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# DECORATION & FURNITURE

## NOVELTIES IN INTERIOR DECORATION.

THE UNION LEAGUE CLUB HOUSE AND THE VETERANS' ROOM OF THE SEVENTH REGIMENT ARMORY.



UNTIL very recently American progress in wall decoration, except in a few instances (Trinity Church, Boston, being that best known), has been comparatively unheralded. Two notable buildings now call attention to it. The decoration of the new Union League Club House is not only important with respect to the uses of the house and the extent of the ornament, but there is a

sumptuousness in the decoration which makes it a thing to be specially enjoyed in itself. The decoration of the Veterans' Room of the Seventh Regiment Armory claims attention intellectual in its nature rather than sensuous, and is equally noteworthy and interesting.

In the Union League to John Lafarge is due the dining-room of the upper floor, overlooking Fifth Avenue. The shape of the room, if it offers problems to the artist, also gives him opportunities in its broken wall surfaces. The sides of the roof slope upward, and in the central half of the room rise into a vault with gabled sides. The outer wall is again broken opposite the entrance to give place to a rose-window which receives its decoration in the beautiful hues of the glass which Mr. Lafarge manufactures for his own purposes. The walls are wainscoted in oak half way up, from which point the artist's labors begin. The walls are first overlaid with gold, which receives an open Elizabethan decoration in blue, green, and red tones up to the vault. There the decoration changes into crowded parallel rows of scroll-work and conventionalized forms worked out in blue, green, red, and white on the gold surface. These forms terminate half way up the vault, leaving the upper portion in dead gold. The gables have an additional decoration on the one end in a coat-of-arms made out of the seal of the State and the national shield framed in scroll-work in the prevailing colors of the decoration; and on the other end is a Victory, modelled by Louis St. Gaudens after designs by Mr. Lafarge. This figure is one of the most delightful features of the room. It is conceived in a large free style with draperies. One hand holds a wreath, the other a sword. The face is turned toward the spectator, and she seems to walk with conquering step and move-

ment full of spirit and grace. The figure is tinted in harmony with the rest of the room. From beneath this vault glowing with color hang the chandeliers, which in the evening, when the room will most probably be chiefly used, must greatly enhance its beauty and brilliancy.

In the halls, which were placed under Mr. Tiffany, the artist has had a more difficult task. From the plan of the building these necessarily receive but little light, and to preserve this was the decorator's first consideration. The upper hall leading to the dining-room offered the fewest obstacles. This has been treated with a Persian design in light tints, which forbid further description than that they shade to and from a "café au lait" with a melodic effect, which any one who has paid any attention to modern color schemes will comprehend. On examination this changing effect appears to be the result of a number of subtle tints of which no one makes itself felt individually. The lower hall is necessarily dark, its large window being further obscured by a brick wall inconveniently near. Here Mr. Tiffany's work is very ingenious. The wall is covered with a bright orange red, whose glaring surface is broken by an Etruscan design of small broken spirals stencilled in violet blue. The result of this is the production of a tone in which both the primary colors are lost, and which in Mr. Tiffany's estimation secures to the hall more light than if the walls were left white.

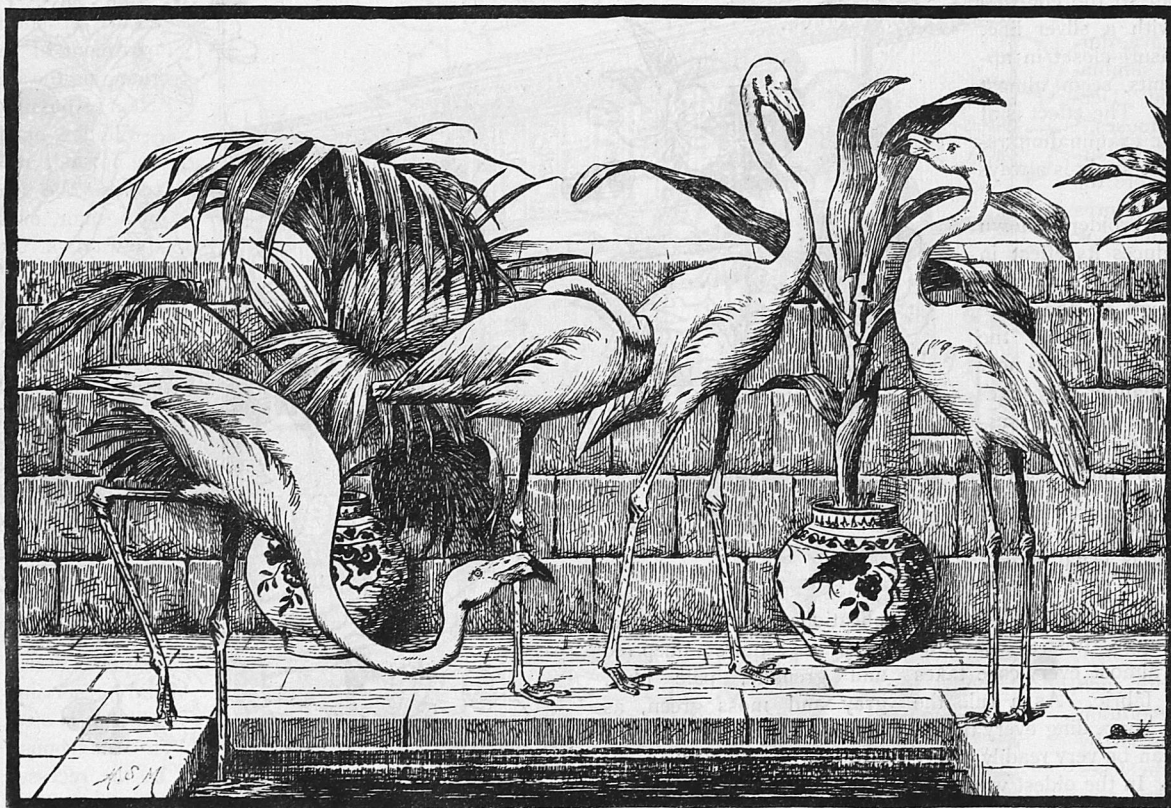
The principal feature of this hall, however, is the use of glass, which plays as prominent a part in the wall as it does in the ornamental windows. The peculiarity of this glass, which is a specialty of Mr. Tiffany, is its power of reflecting light. This adapts it to its place here in a building whose chief use is at night. Over the princi-

In the vestibule the first object has also been to save the light. This Mr. Tiffany has done by covering the wall with silver, which should not only not absorb but should reflect the light. This is varied by Arabic designs in blue, contrasting in its cool tones with the warmth of the hall above.

The theatre, by Frank Hill Smith, is treated in flat tones, broken only into panels by beams and columns. These are warm yellows and pinks, separated by the cool greenish tones of the divisions. The result is a light agreeable effect, increased by the windows, which are filled with stained-glass correspondingly cheerful in color and simple in design. About the stage is a broken ornament in gilt on a dark surface, which breaks abruptly half way into the pinkish salmon of the ceiling, and is repeated directly above the stage, thus dividing the surface into panels, for some ill-advised reason which does not appear.

The Veterans' Room of the Seventh Regiment Armory, when finished, will be one of the interesting sights of this city. This is the work of Mr. Tiffany, with the assistance of the artists George Yewell and F. D. Millet, and is in Mr. Tiffany's most ingenious and picturesque manner. The decoration is fitly chosen with reference to the character of the room, and its special feature is the use of metal and the imitation of metals. Mr. Tiffany, in accordance with the modern spirit of decoration, brings everything to his service which can contribute to the effect. The style of the room belongs to the thirteenth century, but to no one country, although the Moorish element is most pronounced. The walls are panelled in a rich oak. In the upper portion of this wainscoting are set plaques of rusty iron fastened with large bolts, which themselves form

a design on the iron. Above these is a border richly carved in the wood, and set with occasional brilliant glass mosaics. The upper part of the wall is covered with paper and receives a copper and bronze staining, gleaming red, and green, and yellow as the eye changes its position. Over this is laid a Moorish design simulating wrought metal links joined by small bars, a design which is repeated in the wooden screen of the overhanging Moorish balcony, and in the ornamental window in the rear filled with red and green glass mosaics. This wall decoration covers the upper half of each of the two large pillars; and the lower half is covered with iron chains wound solidly about and riveted with large steel bolts. The ceiling is coffered with oak and



PANEL OR FRIEZE DECORATION. "FLAMINGOES." BY H. S. MARKS.

pal landing and surrounding the chandelier is a large Chinese design in glass mosaics, which appears like a whirl of rich color, and which shows to the best advantage by gaslight. The ornamental window is designed to meet the same end, and is worked out in deep rich colors. The various panels each contain some set design: one has a vase of flowers, another dogwood blossoms and a trailing vine, and another the national bird among ribbon forms. But these at first do not appear, the artist's main design being simply decorative in point of color. This second interest in that case becomes additionally welcome.

red California pine inclosing squares of color interlaced with a braided pattern of silver. Carved oak and pillars and slabs of Tennessee marble form the lofty mantelpiece, whose opening is framed in with blue-green glass blocks set tile-fashion.

The lighting of the room forms another unique feature, and partakes also of the grim military character of the place. On either side of a heavy oak beam across the ceiling swing parallel bars of iron, spanning the room. These bars are highly ornamented, and from them hang two large and four small ornaments, which will serve for lighting. These ornamental lights with their twist-



ed curves and spiral tips have all been hammered out after Mr. Tiffany's designs at the armory forge, and are examples of skilful hand-work.

The frieze, which is not yet in place, will be, when finished, the most important decoration of the kind yet attempted here. It is to represent the arms and methods of warfare of all ages, beginning with the savage tribes and coming down to our own day. To each period is allotted a certain division, which comprehends a shield and a plaque. These are inclosed in a border of three bands, which, looped and tied, inclose the different arms, making not only their ornamental frame, but furnishing a repository of historical research which must be always interesting to the student. For example, take the two periods—Roman and Greek. On the Roman shield is the historic wolf, on the plaque a combat; about these one discerns the Roman military yoke, the slings, the tuba, the military eagles, the helmet, the scales of the Roman armor, and a battering-ram. The division appropriated to Greece, which is larger and directly opposite the mantel, has two shields; on one is the lion's head, on the other that of Medusa; the plaque between shows a Greek and an Amazon fighting, and about these are grouped the arms and military insignia of the nation. Each period is thus reproduced, until over the mantel the modern and savage meet in a great cannon-ball crossed with the savage spear and modern rifle in a whirl of color representing the smoke, dust, and motion of battle.

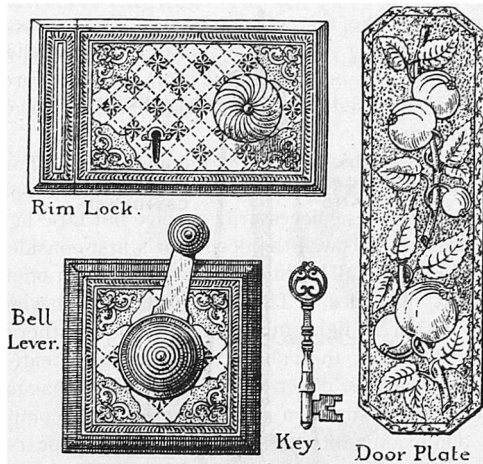
The color treatment is based on the representation of the inlaying of metals. The canvas is first covered with silver, and the dark rich hues of the ground are laid on in transparent colors, through which the silver gleams and occasionally appears intact. The ornaments and arms will appear in relief against these, worked out in higher colors. By day the aspect of the room is somewhat gloomy, but by night this peculiar metallic decoration may be expected to come out in strength. MARY GAY HUMPHREYS.

#### EDIS ON CITY HOUSE DECORATION.

UNDER this department we have, during the past few months, given summaries of the attractive lectures on "Decoration and Furniture of Town Houses," delivered by the well-known British architect, Mr. Robert W. Edis, before the London Society of Arts. These lectures have just appeared complete in book form, with the imprint of Messrs. Scribner & Welford, of this city. They have been revised, amplified, and rendered more valuable by the addition of practical illustrations. Instead of continuing our summaries of these lectures, therefore, we complete our presentation of the author's opinions, by quoting from the published volume before us, which is beautifully printed on very good paper and substantially bound. The illustrations are lithographic reproductions of pen-and-ink drawings, having no especial artistic merit, but they are abundant and to the point.

Mr. Edis has no sympathy with such fashionable follies in room decoration as have been so deliciously satirized by Du Maurier in *Punch*. Indeed he loses no opportunity of expressing his contempt for them. He says: "Any scheme of decoration which shall consist merely of so-called artistic wall papers, arranged in two or more heights, in the present indiscriminate fashion, without reference to the proportion of the rooms, high or low, long or square, or of stiff spider-legged furniture, of would-be quaintness in make or shape, covered with cretonne or stuff, more or less to match the paper—anything, indeed, that shall give a cold, comfortless, not-to-be-touched appearance, a sort of culminating finish of so-called high art decoration, is as much a mistake as the dreary lifeless formality, of the gilt and ginger-bread type, of imitation French work, so long affected. The art work in the room should assist, not take away from, its home-like feeling. We want a

room we can live in, delight in, and be really at home in; not a museum in which we may walk about and admire, but must not touch, in which everything seems got up in the highest art fashion, which you are to look at and say, 'How pretty! how lovely!' but which, somehow or other, will probably lead many common-sense people to go away dissatisfied, and think that if this kind of frozen art is the real artistic bread we are to



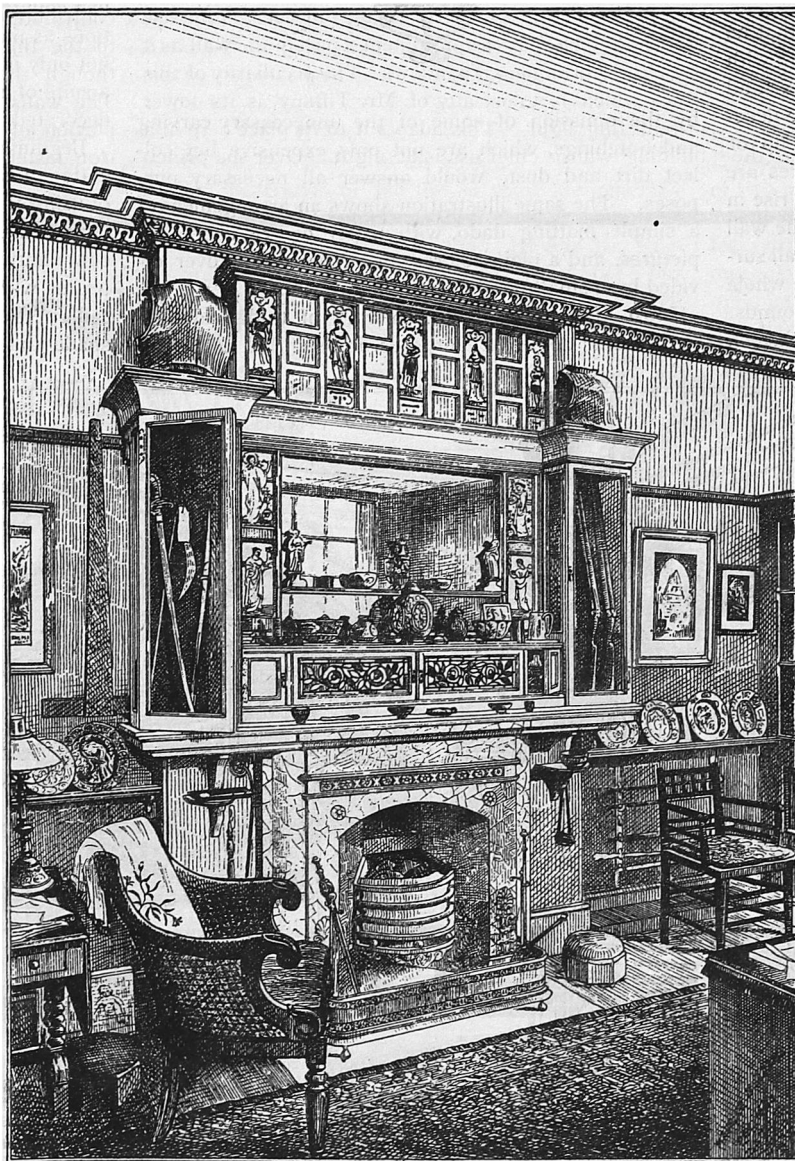
partake of, there is but little real satisfaction in it. Surely all this kind of stilted decoration is giving a stone when people are asking for bread."

The use of what is called a flattening coat, or finishing coat, of paint mixed with turpentine only, for wall surfaces, so as to produce a dull flat or dead surface without gloss, our author thinks a mistake, for this kind of work does not last when exposed to the weather; it

terially to the general artistic effect. The broad frieze, above the picture or general wall space, should be much lighter in tone, and here of course there is an opportunity for real art-work. A broad decorative painted frieze, painted in compartments or panels, with figure-subjects, Mr. Edis believes to be the most desirable finish; but we caution our readers to beware how they introduce such pretentious art-work into their homes. To be desirable it must be executed by an artist of more than ordinary ability, and for the work of such an artist a very large price must be paid. When our author commends stencil work of a certain kind, he suggests something which is more practical, because within reach of persons of moderate means. He says: "As an example of what may be done in stencil work in oil, I have seen some designs by a practical working decorator, in which the general treatment is thoroughly artistic in its character, and free from the usual mechanical sameness of coloring, or reproduction of various cut stencil plates, in one tone or shade of tinting, and in unvaried and monotonous repetition. In ordinary stencil decoration, the pattern is generally rubbed on in one tone of color, and the arrangement of the design is, as a rule, a mere reproduction of parts prolonged indefinitely, according to the amount of space to be covered; in the special work I refer to, instead of plain flat treatment of the stencil pattern, there is produced, by cleverness of handling and artistic touch, a varied tone in the different leaves and fruit forming the pattern, either by working the stencil brush very slightly over a portion of the leaf, and increasing the strength of touch and amount of color in the lower portion, by which a pleasant gradation of color is carried out, or by the use of two or more tints in the same leaf or flower, carefully blended at the moment, and worked off into delicately shadowed surfaces, by which an extremely good effect is obtained. The general decorative effect is still as it should be in this kind of work, quite flat and simple; but infinitely greater artistic character is given to the work by the skill and feeling shown in the manipulation of the brush, and in the interchange of one or two colors, to say nothing of a fairly artistic rendering and decorative treatment of the design itself by interchanging the stencil plates, and avoiding, as far as possible, any formal repetition."

Window-openings, we are reminded, are not half utilized, as a rule, in sitting-rooms; the space is very often filled up by a chair, or small table, altogether in the way; in these window-recesses, Mr. Edis suggests, might be made comfortable seats, or divans, amply and fully stuffed for ease and comfort, covered with leather or stuff, to harmonize with the other work in the rooms; and the seat inside might be fitted up for newspapers or magazines, or, in the bedrooms, for clothes, bonnets, or any other special purpose for which they might be desired. Plain pine-framed seats and risers are all that are required, properly stuffed and covered; any good joiner or upholsterer would make these at a very moderate cost, and provide not only comfortable seats but useful spaces for stowing away and preserving all sorts of things, for which it is often so difficult to find room in a city house of ordinary dimensions. In the recesses of the bedrooms might be arranged hanging closets for dresses, with shelves for linen, boxes for boots and bonnets, and the numerous articles of dress which necessarily accumulate in the household, where we have to provide for all sorts of seasons, and are often doubtful whether we want spring, summer, or winter clothing. A simple pine-panelled cupboard front is all that is required.

The centre panel might be filled in with looking-glass down to the ground like an ordinary wardrobe, the doors divided, so as not to be cumbersome or heavy, the whole height of the cupboard being from seven to eight feet, including the bonnet or boot box at the bottom and the shelf at the top. Between the top of this and the ceiling the space should be filled up with a smaller cupboard, with shelves for stowing away surplus



A STUDY MANTELPIECE. BY ROBERT W. EDIS.

shows every mark of dirt, and will not stand washing. This picture-surface, if painted, should not be varnished, but the dado and all wood-work of the doors and windows will be made much more effective if varnished. The wood-work should be painted of similar color, as a rule, to the walls, but of much darker tone in two shades, and the panels covered with good ornament, stencilled on, all of which is inexpensive, and adds ma-